
Claims

1 claim:

19. A method to facilitate forums for discussion, said method comprising:

providing an array of spaced apart locations at each of which a plurality of users may enter into discussion with one another in person,

providing each location with means for displaying indicia associated with a subject for discussion,

displaying discussion topics by said indicia,

arranging said array of spaced apart locations so as to enable users to gather together at said spaced apart locations to form groups to pursue the discussion indicated by said indicia at said spaced apart locations,

displaying a discussion topic by the indicia at at least one location to set up a discussion group at the location associated with said indicia,

providing a remote control for remotely altering the indicia at at least one location to display a discussion topic at said location to set up a discussion group at said location,

controlling the indicia at at least one of said spaced apart locations remotely by said remote control,

whereby users may participate in person in structured and dynamic discussion.

20. The method of claim 19 further providing means for said remote control to alter the indicia at a plurality of said spaced apart locations.

21. The method of claim 19 further providing a local control at at least one of said spaced apart locations for locally altering the indicia at the location associated with said local control.

22. The method of claim 19 further providing at least one location with a table.

23. The method of claim 22 further providing means to illuminate the table top in a color associated with the subject to be discussed.

24. The method of claim 19 further providing a display for displaying a plurality of the subjects currently for discussion.

25. The method of claim 24 further providing means for said display to be altered by said remote control.

26. The method of claim 19 further providing indicia that display a subject that is common to a plurality of locations.

27. The method of claim 19 providing locations with indicia that comprise color whereby indicia associated with similar subjects may display those subjects in the same color.

28. The method of claim 19 to facilitate any one selected from the group consisting of: meetings, conferences, forums, networking sessions, training sessions, educational programs, entertainment, public consultations, qualitative research by market researchers, the gauging of public opinion and news gathering.

29. A method to facilitate forums for discussion, said method comprising:

- providing an array of spaced apart locations at each of which a plurality of users may enter into discussion with one another in person,

- providing each location with means for displaying indicia associated with a subject for discussion,

- displaying discussion topics by said indicia,

- arranging said array of spaced apart locations so as to enable users to gather together at said spaced apart locations to form groups to pursue the discussion indicated by said indicia at said spaced apart locations,

- displaying a discussion topic by the indicia at at least one of said spaced apart locations to set up a discussion group at the location associated with said indicia,

- providing a local electronic control at each of said spaced apart locations for locally altering the indicia at the location associated with said local electronic control to display a discussion topic at said location to set up a discussion group at said location,

- controlling said indicia locally by said local electronic control,

whereby users may participate in person in structured and dynamic discussion.

30. The method of claim 29 further providing a display for displaying a plurality of the subjects currently for discussion.

31. The method of claim 30 further providing means for altering said display from at least one of the spaced apart locations.

32. The method of claim 29 further providing indicia that display a subject that is common to a plurality of locations.

33. The method of claim 29 further providing at least one location with a table and further providing means to illuminate the table top in a color associated with the subject to be discussed.

34. A communications system, said communications system comprising:

an array of spaced apart locations at each of which a plurality of users may enter into discussion with one another in person,

a sign at each of said spaced apart locations for displaying indicia associated with a subject for discussion whereby said sign displays subjects for discussion at said spaced apart locations,

control means for operating the sign at at least one location wherein said control means can alter the indicia displayed by the sign at said location enabling the sign at said location to display a subject for discussion,

wherein said communications system includes the following communication protocols:

- (1) said sign indicates the type of discussion that members of a discussion group wish to pursue
- (2) information displayed by said sign can be altered, replaced or amended, and
- (3) a new discussion group is set up at a location by displaying a new discussion topic on the sign associated with that location.

35. The communications system of claim 34 wherein said control means can operate a plurality of the signs at said spaced apart locations.

36. The communications system of claim 34, said communications system further including a display for displaying a plurality of the subjects currently for discussion.

37. The communications system of claim 34 further including indicia that display a subject that is common to a plurality of locations.

38. The communications system of claim 34, said communications system further including a table at at least one location and means to illuminate the table top in a color associated with the subject to be discussed.